

PaleoArt Study

Pick a painting or illustration to study — look for good detail, color and a range of plants and animals.

Study the art. Make a sketch of it. See if you can find the name of the artist.

Answer the following questions:

Do you feel that this painting is realistic? If you feel it IS realistic, what techniques did the artist use to make it realistic? If you feel it is NOT realistic, why not? (Think about color and tone, details, foreground, background, proportion).

What scientific evidence do you think would be necessary for the artist to have created this painting/illustration?

What aspects of this painting/illustration do you think are based purely the artist's imagination? Why?

PaleoArt Study:

Background Information

INTEGRATION: SCIENCE & ART

Charles Knight was the first artist who tried to depict realistic images of dinosaurs (1890–1940). Some artists work closely with scientists to "bring dinosaurs to life;" others rely more on their imagination. The PaleoArt Study asks students to observe a piece of art closely and analyze both artistic technique as well as scientific validity.

What we develop hypotheses about:

- **Fossil and geological clues are used to develop a picture of the ancient environment and plants and animals that lived alongside dinosaurs**
- **Surface texture on fossilized bones give clues about where muscles attached**
- **Color and skin texture are often based on recent reptiles and other living animals**

What we speculate about/we can't know from fossil evidence:

- **Skin color**
- **Skin texture**
- **Eye color**
- **(most things that relate to soft body parts)**
- **Shape of pupil**
- **Most behavior/life style**

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